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USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

JUNE 1977

No. 147

FEDERAL FORESTRY

The First 100 Years. In 1876, the Nation's Centennial year, Congress authorized \$2,000 to establish a federal office devoted to forestry. What has happened since that beginning, through the first century of federal forestry, is pictorially described in a new publication from USDA's Forest Service. The book, entitled "100 Years of Federal Forestry," begins with a look at lumbering before federal forest resources were protected from excessive cutting and grazing. It then describes early efforts on conservation and forestry research and the growth of federal-state forest fires protection and planting programs. The effect of technical advances and economic growth on American forests and the increasing environmental and human concerns in forestry are also explored. The book ends with a preview into the second century of American forestry as it is shaped by new technology, recent legislation, and increased demands on forest resources. "100 Years of Federal Forestry" contains some 450 photographs, many of them treasures from the century-old photo collection of the Forest Service. As the pictorial story unfolds, the reader gets a fascinating view of hand-logging operations, ox-drawn equipment, spectacular natural scenery--and equally spectacular forest fires--smokejumper operations, right on up to today's computer-run programs. Copies of "100 Years of Federal Forestry" (AIB-402) are for sale for \$3.80 each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

PROMISING PESTICIDE

Not To Be Sneezed At. Humans are in daily competition with hordes of seemingly uncountable kinds of insects that inhabit, eat, and generally befoul our food. A major stumbling block in the fight is how to get rid of the pests without getting rid of ourselves in the process. Recently, a promising new source for effective insecticides that are not harmful to humans has been discovered in an unlikely place--the pepper shaker. Research conducted by scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service revealed that ground black pepper and its alcohol extract are highly toxic to two pests that cause heavy damage to stored food products: the rice weevil and the cowpea weevil. When applied topically, both crude and purified black pepper extracts caused very high mortality among the two insects. However, application of only pepperine, the major component of black pepper, was much less effective, indicating that a minor ingredient of black pepper may play a bigger role as an insecticide. As the research continues, ARS scientists believe black pepper should live up to its promise as a source for safe, naturally-occurring insecticides.



SUMMER FOOD PREVIEW

Retail food prices are expected to move somewhat higher during the summer and the rest of this year. Consumers can expect a rise in grocery store prices in 1977 to average 6 percent above 1976. Here is a look at what to expect in consumer food prices in the months ahead.

MEAT--There will be higher prices at the meat counter this summer. Steaks and hamburger are especially popular during the barbecue season and the demand may outpace beef supplies. Choice beef prices this summer are expected to go up 3 to 4 percent from recent levels. Hamburger prices could rise more than that.

Shoppers will notice that pork prices are also on the upswing this summer, climbing about 8 to 10 percent from spring levels. The increase is mainly the result of seasonally smaller pork supplies. Because prices for both beef and pork will be up, hotdogs will cost more, too.

POULTRY--Prices for chicken, another popular barbecue item, will also be creeping up this summer--turkey, too.

SEAFOOD--We seem to be more and more hooked on fish these days. But heavy fish catches are gradually decreasing the world's supply of fish. Prices, already at record levels, will likely increase moderately through the remainder of 1977.

DAIRY--There will be more milk, butter, and cheese in the dairy cases in the coming months. Prices for butter and cheese should level off during the rest of the year. But shoppers can expect some further rise in the price of milk, partly because of the April rise in support prices to dairy farmers, whose hay and meal-feed costs have soared.

VEGETABLES--We'll be seeing plenty of fresh vegetables on hand this summer, especially snap beans, broccoli, cabbage, cucumbers and tomatoes; so there will be a great variety to choose from for summer meals. However, partly because of the California drought, prices for fresh vegetables will remain higher than last summer, though most are already down substantially from their record highs early this year following the severe winter freeze in Florida.

Shoppers have recently turned more to canned and frozen vegetables, possibly because of the shorter supplies and higher prices of fresh vegetables last winter. With wholesale prices advancing in the face of a potentially tighter supply picture, you can expect moderately higher prices for canned and frozen vegetables in the months to come.

There will be adequate supplies of pickles, beets, sauerkraut and baked beans for garnishing barbecue platters.

FRUITS--Because of the freeze damage to Florida citrus, and smaller supplies of apples, fresh fruit prices have averaged substantially higher this year. Prices for these major fruits are expected to continue to advance further during the summer. We can watch for bargains on other fruits as they come into season: peaches, cherries, nectarines and plums. Canned fruit prices, however, are expected to continue to go up for the rest of the year. Frozen orange juice markups are underway, due to brisk demand and reduced stocks.

EGGS--There will be more eggs this summer than last year, but prices will be up seasonally from their depressed levels this spring.

OTHER ITEMS TO WATCH FOR

MELONS--For those who like to enhance their meals with melons, cantaloupes and honeydews will be in good supply into early July. But the melon crops have been directly affected by the lack of water in California. Farmers were unable to plant as many this year. However, there will be fewer available later this summer. Watermelons, coming from other areas of the country, will be in good supply throughout the summer.

BREAD--Bread won't be taking a bigger slice out of grocery budgets this summer and should remain near 35 cents a pound loaf. This year's large wheat crop and the heaviest reserves in nearly 15 years are the reasons. The prices consumers pay for bread have not gone down with the farmers' wheat prices because of escalating costs after the wheat leaves the farm.

COFFEE--Consumers are drinking less coffee as prices rise. Coffee prices have climbed from \$2.56 for a 1-pound can in January to almost \$3.40 in April but relief may be in sight as wholesale prices have been declining since mid-April. Coffee prices have been a major factor in the overall food price rise this year.

SUGAR--The price of sugar has begun to level out and even rise a little. In January, shoppers paid about \$1.05 for a 5-pound bag; now they're paying about \$1.10. Prices are expected to inch even higher, reflecting the recent rise in raw sugar prices. Still, these are bargain-basement levels compared with the high of \$3.00 for a 5-pound bag in late 1974.

On the beverage side, soft drink prices are also going uphill, although thirsty Americans are still expected to drink a lot of cola-type beverages this summer. For those with a sweet tooth, watch for candy bars to go from 15 to 20 cents as a result of record high prices of cocoa and chocolate.

BEEF GRADE CHANGES STUDIED

Report Looks At The Before-And-After. Much ado and furor surrounded changes in the Federal beef grading rules, from the first proposal in 1974 until the new regulations became effective in February 1976. USDA's Economic Research Service recently took a before-and-after look at beef grades and prices in relation to the new rules. According to the study, farmers have been getting prices that more accurately reflect the quality of their cattle since the regulations went into effect. The study says the new rules have resulted in larger premiums and also larger discounts for cattle of differing yield and quality grades. Yield grading, which establishes the amount of usable retail cuts in a carcass, was optional before the rule changed; it is now mandatory for all carcasses that are graded for quality, i.e., Prime, Choice, Good. For example, two Choice grade carcasses which were formerly priced the same, might now be priced very differently, depending on their yield grades. This gives cattle producers a strong incentive to raise meatier--or higher yielding--animals. The price differences for individual beef carcasses, the study found, did not cause retail beef prices to change because the premium prices on some carcasses and the discount prices for other carcasses tend to cancel each other out. A second aim of the grade rule changes was to permit beef formerly in the top of the Good quality grade to qualify for low Choice and for high Choice to qualify as Prime. The ERS study found a significant redistribution of meat among the various grades since the February 1976 date, with a bigger share going to Prime and Choice and less to Good. However, the study did not detect that consumer demand for beef decreased because of the changed grading rules.

AEROBIC FITNESS/WORK CAPACITY

Take A Deep Breath. For people who spend most of their time behind a desk, strenuous physical labor can be a painful, possibly even dangerous, experience. If you need, or desire, to drop your pencil and grab a shovel, how can you be sure you are in shape for hard labor? To answer just such a question, a team from USDA's Forest Service evolved an aerobic physical fitness program. The program was developed so that anyone volunteering for arduous field tasks--like fighting forest fires--would be fit enough to do the job safely and well. In the year since the program was implemented, approximately 3,500 firefighters and 10,000 support personnel have met job fitness standards. Also, the program has been endorsed by the Civil Service Commission, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, and leading experts in work physiology and sports medicine. The Forest Service describes aerobic fitness as a well-developed oxygen delivery system. The connection between aerobic fitness and work capacity is a direct one. The body requires energy to perform work; energy is created primarily by burning fats and carbohydrates. This process takes oxygen. The maximum ability of the body to take in, transport, and use oxygen is the best single measure of fitness and work capacity. In connection with the program, the Forest Service issued "Fitness and Work Capacity" (FS-315), an 88-page booklet which offers a step-by-step approach to achieving physical fitness. The booklet supplies weight control tips, offers ways to assess fitness and shows how to pick the right exercise. Copies of "Fitness and Work Capacity" are available for \$2.20 each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. A special calculator designed to figure fitness scores is also sold by GPO for 80 cents. The stock number is 001-001-00404-9.

TREES HAVE TROUBLE

Spreading Chestnuts; Stately Elms; Mighty Oaks. American trees have their problems. If it's not pollution, people or pests, it's blights or wilts. Chestnuts succumbed to chestnut blight; elms are battling Dutch elm disease. Now, oaks may be the next tree to kick the bucket. Oaks, leading timber species and important shade trees in the eastern half of the U.S., are being attacked by oak wilt. According to scientists, this fungal disease has spread alarmingly during the past 3 decades in eastern and central States. Some scientists predict that within the next 30 years about half of the Nation's oaks will be afflicted. Researchers of USDA's Agricultural Research Service have a bright spot in this dark picture. They have, for the first time, found red oak seedlings that appear to be resistant to oak wilt. If the promise of current research is confirmed, resistant red oaks may be available in sufficient quantity in a few years for the nursery trade--thus helping to insure the continuation of red oaks as shade trees. However, there are stumbling blocks to overcome before science can insure that red oaks will remain as important hardwood lumber trees. First, an oak tree grows at its own rate; very little can be done to hurry this. Reproducing resistant oaks sexually would take about 30 to 40 years. Too, red oak trees are so complex genetically that many of the offsprings would not be resistant anyway. ARS scientists are now trying to develop new techniques for propagating the resistant oaks, including tissue culturing and rooting. So to paraphrase, we can hope that mighty resistant oaks from tiny resistant acorns grow.

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